

SB 128, The Ad Astra Opportunity Tax Credit
Proponent
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February 9, 2023

Chairwoman Tyson and Assessment and Taxation Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to share with you as a proponent for SB 128. I honor you all for your service to Kansas.

Raising, nurturing, and educating children is the right and responsibility of parents and guardians. This bill will assist parents with their rightful role in education. The US Supreme Court on four occasions has made it clear that the parent is in control of educational decisions for their child. Parents have rights now but are unaware how to use them.

These are the US Supreme Court Rulings: Act *Troxel v. Granville*, 530 U.S. 57 (2000) the Constitution “protects the fundamental right of parents to make decisions concerning the care, custody, and control of their children”; *Santosky v. Kramer*, 455 U.S. 745 (1982) recognizing “fundamental liberty interest of natural parents in the care, custody, and management of their child”; *Wisconsin v. Yoder*, 406 U.S. 205 (1972) recognizing “liberty of parents...to direct the upbringing and education of children”; *Pierce v. Society of Sisters*, 268 U.S. 510 (1925) parents have the right "to direct the upbringing and education of children under their control."

All of us want the best possible education for Kansas children. The problem is many parents feel their children's public education is not meeting their academic needs and the values the parents wish to be upheld. Next, the parents must come up with a financial plan to pay for the school they have identified to meet their child's educational requirements. What sacrifices will the family make, if in addition to paying tuition for their K-12 student they are also paying college expenses for an older child. So, then the family takes on more employment, pays more in income taxes, and fully funds the public schools with their property taxes. This was our family situation. Instead of paying more in income taxes, a tax credit, without burdensome government requirements, would have made a big difference for our family. At a time when Kansas is giving away over 10 billion in tax exemptions to big companies and other entities, helping Kansas families with a tax credit is a small price to insure that children are properly educated as future Kansas citizens and taxpayers.

How did Kansas arrive at this point where parents are scrambling for alternatives, homeschooling is on the rise like never before, and school boards are routinely hearing from parents? Parents, students, teachers, and taxpayers are expressing concerns

over public education in increasing numbers. I wish to take this opportunity to explain some of the reasons I feel Kansans have concerns.

Kansas was the first state in the nation to fully adopt Social Emotional Learning (SEL) as a K-12 comprehensive curriculum in 2012. Thus, we became the first state to reap the disastrous consequences of this destructive curriculum. Most of the school day is devoted to SEL as it reaches into all the subject areas.

What did this SEL redirection in education usher into the Kansas classrooms?

Consistent surveying and data collecting; expensive learning management systems used for online classwork throughout the day; data stored on students not shown to parents and the files are not secured by KSDE; parents and businesses are told that emotional intelligence is more important than academics; behavioral testing normalizes every possible bad behavior; survey questions are worded assuming the student is guilty; 6th grade students are educated on all forms of drugs, sex, and illegal activity with abusive hour long surveys that over time have brought educators 71 M in grants; a focus on the shortcomings of students as their “mental health” is measured by their teachers and themselves; lessons for students to prepare their funerals; suicides have risen to be the second leading cause of death among our youth since SEL began;

Students are taught about transgender ideology and asked if they are gender confused and born in the wrong body; teachers forced to comply with changing student gender pronouns and even students becoming furries and dog genders; Title IX is at risk for protecting women’s sports; pornographic library books; critical race theory woven into classes along with a focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion because of the Biden executive DEIA order; assessments show students are testing at the lowest possible level ever in math and reading; a high percentage of students advancing to higher education need remediation costing the families and students precious time and money.

Who began SEL and how was it put into place?

1994 brought a dramatic shift in public education. It was that year the term Social Emotional Learning (SEL) was coined at a meeting hosted by the Fetzer Institute, founded by New Age guru John Fetzer. **A mental health focus under SEL curriculums began.** The Fetzer Institute website states, “The Fetzer Institute’s commitment to whole child development is decades-long. In the 1990s, Fetzer played a significant funding and organizing role in the ground-breaking research for social and emotional learning and has been a longtime supporter of the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning. **Now, 30 years later, we are working to add pluralistic, spiritual development into whole child curricula.**” Fetzer’s wealth allowed him to institutionalize his new age vision into a thriving foundation—the Fetzer Institute—which was designed to carry his insights into the future in hopes that it would help catalyze a global spiritual transformation with SEL as their means of reaching and molding the minds and spirituality of the whole school, whole community, whole child (WSCC).

A 1995 publication, ***Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ*** by Dan Goleman triggered a wave of belief among businesses and educators that only 20% of

IQ factors determine life success, while 80% of success comes from emotional intelligence or EQ. This theory has been discredited.

That same year, 1994, President Clinton signed **Goals 2000 Educate America Act** into law. This push for Outcomes Based Education (OBE), implemented by Goals 2000, changed the focus away from a broad academic foundation, but instead toward state directed outcomes for the child. With it, state curriculum standards and standardized tests circumvented local school district control. Workforce Development education began training workers for a nationally managed economy with the passage of the federal **School to Work Act and the Workforce Investment Act.** Although KSBE voted to not bring Workforce Development to Kansas schools, then Governor Bill Graves signed an executive order to do just that. After decades of this socialist-style education and psychological conditioning, the American workforce has gone from being the best educated in the industrialized world to the worst.

Goals 2000 was reauthorized under President Bush's **No Child Left Behind**, with heavy handed federal intrusion and mental health grants. Next came President Obama's **Race to the Top/Common Core** curriculum. A one size fits all curriculum for the nation's schools was necessary to put into place a system linking the US Department of Education with all 50 state education departments. A memorandum of agreement was signed by then Governor Mark Parkinson to bring Common Core into Kansas schools without authorization from the Kansas Legislature for the increased funding to do so. Schools are now under the federal **2015 Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).** Not only did ESSA codify Common Core, but it changed the primary purpose of education from academic to social and emotional learning (SEL) and requires SEL state reporting. **The National Governor's Association** is involved in pushing uniform education reforms across the nation.

Also established in 1994 was **CASEL, originally named the Collaborative to Advance Social and Emotional Learning**, but now called Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional learning. They are well funded by many foundations and immediately began hosting conferences, producing documents, and promoting SEL guidelines for educators to "advance educational equity" using "ongoing evaluation." KSDE follows CASEL's guidelines.

1994 was the foundation year for The Communities That Care Youth surveys and Kansas was first in line that year to give these harmful surveys with invalid data being collected on all Kansas school children in the 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th grades.

To sum up, all these changes to education began in 1994: SEL introduced by the Fetzer Institute, the writing of "Emotional Intelligence" book, OBE (Goals 2000), the School to Work Act, The Communities That Care organization (KCTC), and Collaborative for Academic, Social, Emotional Learning (CASEL). These entities efforts were coordinated in one year to redirect education. United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (**UNESCO**) is a force behind SEL worldwide. The CDC trains on

components of the **Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child** (WSCC) under their SEL programs.

SEL also ushered in an opportunity for businesses and public private partnerships to get in on the revenue source of creating curriculum and surveys to data mine students. Student data is more valuable than data from the Dept. of Defense. Kansas taxpayers have a right to know how much of their money is wasted on SEL data mining. Our schools are fully funded, spending on average over \$17,000 in 2023 per child. Millions and millions of those dollars are being spent on SEL class work. A better return on your tax dollars would be academics since in 2021 on average only 28% of students are proficient in high school math and only 34% of 8th graders are proficient in reading.

“Social Emotional Factors Measured Locally” is first on the list of “Results” needed for **accreditation in Kansas schools and it is the number one standard by Council for Accreditation of Education Preparation (CAEP), who certifies teacher colleges, as it *“facilitates candidates’ reflection of their personal biases to increase their understanding and practice of equity, diversity, and inclusion.”***

What is the solution to stopping Social Emotional Learning?

Parents must be in charge of the education of their children and inform public schools in writing with wishes for their child’s education. They have the backing of four US Supreme Court rulings.

Schools are not focusing upon academics, but instead are using a dangerous SEL curriculum with learning management systems to collect much behavioral data on children. We should require all our legislators, Kansas School Board Members, and Commissioner of Education every day to take the behavioral testing and SEL classwork, to which they are subjecting our Kansas students and for which they are paying massive sums of taxpayer money. Would you like unqualified and unlicensed individuals evaluating your psychological state and creating data files on you every day?

Please help me push for the end of indoctrination through SEL. It is separating students from their faith, family, and freedoms. We must start protecting our precious Kansas children, not use them as commodities in a SEL workforce experiment while we protect and finance a socialist system of education. The majority of our undereducated public school students are not equipped to compete in the world economy. Our nation is at risk! For all these reasons, while we wait for KSBE to end Social Emotional Learning and entrust teachers to advance truthful and meaningful academics to be the strength of our Kansas schools, I ask for your support for SB 128 to help parents find proper alternative education for their children.